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18<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Deputy Robert Troy, TD  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

Dear Deputy Troy,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the following Parliamentary Question, which was submitted to this Department for response.

**PQ 45596/19**

**To ask the Minister for Health if it is HSE policy to neglect to provide persons approved for and in receipt of home help hours on bank holidays; and if so, if it is a cost cutting exercise - Robert Troy.**

Home Support Services are an important component of the provision of service to older people with assessed needs and to support them in their choice of living in their own home and community. The HSE, working within its available resources, has sought to maintain and when possible to expand the range and volume of services available to support people to remain in their own homes, to prevent early admission to long term residential care and to support people to return to their homes following an acute hospital admission. The Home Support resource is used to its maximum effect as part of each individual recipient's care plan.

The demand for the Home Support Services, and for additional supports through the Intensive Home Care Package Scheme, continues to grow as the population of older people expands and as more older people with complex care needs are maintained at home. As well as the demand for additional service levels, the need for services outside of core hours Monday to Friday is also increasing.

While the resources available are substantial, and every effort is being made to provide people with the services at the times and on the days they are required, the resources are nonetheless finite. Clients are prioritised for service provision dependent on their individual assessed needs.

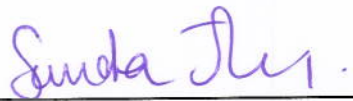
The overall home support resource and the range of providers, including HSE directly employed staff, is carefully managed to ensure that this key service is available at the required times, in a flexible way and at the appropriate standard to support clients' changing assessed needs.

Professional staff on the front line who are aware of local circumstances, as well as undertaking the initial needs assessment, also undertake care needs reviews so as to ensure that services are targeted at those clients with a high level of dependency and in accordance with their assessed need. If a client's need changes, the client or carer can request a review by contacting the local health office.

The HSE continues to actively recruit staff as required and acknowledges the valuable contribution that our home support staff make in the high level of care provided to our clients and the positive impact the home support service has on enabling older people to remain living in their own homes and communities.

The Department is currently engaged in a detailed process to develop a new stand-alone, statutory scheme for the financing and regulation of home support services. Developing a new statutory scheme will be an important step in ensuring that the system operates in a consistent and fair manner for all those who need home support services. The Sláintecare Implementation Strategy commits to the introduction of the new scheme in 2021.

Yours sincerely,



**Sandra Tuohy**  
**Assistant National Director – Operations**  
**Services for Older People**